



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Office of Information
Press Service



WASHINGTON, D. C.

Release -- Immediate

April 19, 1935.

WILDLIFE BUREAU WILL DISCONTINUE
BREEDERS' PERMITS TO TRAP DUCKS

Wild Breeding Stock is Too Low to Justify
Risking Any Part of It, Says
Biological Survey

- - -

Because of the present necessity for conserving the breeding stock of wild ducks and geese, the Federal Government will no longer issue permits to take waterfowl or their eggs for propagation, the Bureau of Biological Survey announced today. Exceptions will be made only when the work is to be undertaken by State game conservation authorities, or, in rare instances, when experienced commercial breeders require replenishment of wild stock.

The breeding stock of wild birds, says the Bureau, is much too low at this time to justify risking any portion of it in the hands of inexperienced persons, however worthy their intentions may be. Commercial game farms, moreover, are now able to furnish ample stocks of waterfowl bred from pure wild strains.

The Bureau points out that the semi-domesticated birds which can be obtained from commercial propagators are already somewhat accustomed to artificial conditions. Inexperienced game breeders planning to raise ducks for decoy purposes or to restock private shooting preserves, it advises, will therefore have much better results and fewer losses with birds from game farms than with breeding stock obtained directly from the wild.

"The Biological Survey," says the statement, "is anxious to aid in the breeding of waterfowl, but the contribution to the wild migratory population from birds produced under artificial conditions by inexperienced persons is at best inconsiderable. Investigators find that in most cases where such attempts have been made the wild birds trapped for breeding stock are lost from one cause or another, and even when rearing is successful and young birds are produced, bird-banding tests show that they seldom join their wild kin. Ornithologists of the Survey have therefore reached the conclusion that there is no possibility that wild fowl can be restored to any relative abundance by artificial propagation alone.

"The national waterfowl restoration program begun by the Biological Survey in 1934 seems at present to offer the method which promises most success. This program is based on the known fact that the increase of waterfowl is tremendous wherever natural conditions are favorable. It provides for saving adequate breeding stocks of wild fowl by suitable regulatory action and for gradually restoring these birds by improving conditions and by promoting natural production on the hereditary nesting grounds.

"The restoration program includes the proposal to reclaim for wildlife several million acres of land formerly made up of sloughs, shallow lakes, and marshes, and used for centuries by ducks and geese as a gigantic waterfowl incubator and nursery. Most of this area has since been ruined for such purposes by drought or drainage and what is left of it has only about 70 percent of its original population of birds. Since the national program was inaugurated in June of last year, almost 700,000 acres of such land have been acquired or are under commitment.

"Every means will be used to make such areas into ideal nesting and rearing places by re-establishing the original water levels, encouraging growth of natural vegetation for food and cover, and by giving extra protection to eggs and young birds against natural enemies."